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SUBJECT: GAMBIAN ELECTION OFFICIAL RESULTS - JAMMEH WINS, OPPOSITION CONCEDES

SUMMARY: GAMBIAN PRESIDENT YAHYA A.J.J. JAMMEH WAS REELECTED WITH 52.96 PERCENT OF THE VOTE IN THE OCTOBER 18, 2001 POLL. THE INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSION (IEC) ANNOUNCED THE OFFICIAL RESULTS AT 1830 LOCAL TIME ON OCTOBER 19, 2001. MAJOR CHALLENGER OUSAINOU DARBOE (WHO POLLED 32.67 PERCENT OF THE VOTE) CALLED PRESIDENT JAMMEH DURING THE AFTERNOON OF OCTOBER 19 TO CONCEDE DEFEAT. INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVERS STATED THAT THEY WERE 'SATISFIED' WITH THE CONDUCT OF THE VOTE. END SUMMARY.

- OUR DEPLOYMENT
- STATISTICS
- THE MECHANICS OF THE VOTE
- FONI FUN: TALES FROM THE OPPOSITION-FREE ZONE
- WEST COAST
- NO INFILTRATORS IN ILLIASA
- KWINELLA SERVES AS KIANG CENTRAL NEXUS
- ALBREDA, JUFFUREH AND BINTA
- THE MECHANICS OF THE COUNT
- WHAT THE INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS SAID
- STUNNINGLY GRACIOUS MAJOR OPPOSITION CONCESSION

¶1. WE DEPLOYED A TEAM OF SIX IEC-ACCREDITED ELECTION OBSERVERS FOR THE OCTOBER 18 POLL. WE CONTRIBUTED OUR CDA, IROG, GSO, OUR PROGRAM COORDINATOR AND OUR POLITICAL ASSISTANT. IN THEIR CONTINUING TRADITION OF UNCONDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR US, EMBASSY DAKAR CONTRIBUTED THE DATT. CDA AND OUR POLITICAL ASSISTANT COVERED THE WEST COAST AND THE INDEPENDENCE STADIUM COUNTING CENTER IN BAKAU (BANJUL) ON OCTOBER 18. IROG COVERED THE FIVE FONI DIVISIONS AND THE BWIAM COUNTING CENTER FROM OCTOBER 16-19. GSO COVERED THE THREE KIANG DIVISIONS AND THE KWINELLA COUNTING CENTER FROM OCTOBER 16-19. THE DATT COVERED ILLIASA DIVISION AND THE FARAFENNI COUNTING CENTER FROM OCTOBER 17-19. OUR PROGRAM COORDINATOR COVERED BIJILO (THE SUBURBAN BANJUL POLLING STATION THAT HAD THE LARGEST AMOUNT OF VOTERS REGISTERED IN A SINGLE POLLING STATION IN THE COUNTRY), AND CROSSED THE RIVER TO COVER ALBREDA, JUFFUREH AND BINTA KINTEH ON OCTOBER 18. EACH TEAM PICKED ONE POLLING STATION TO OBSERVE OPEN AND CLOSE, AND THEN TO FOLLOW TO THE RESPECTIVE COUNTING CENTER.

¶2. OVER 80 PERCENT OF THE 509,395 REGISTERED VOTERS VOTED DURING THE OCTOBER 18 POLL. THESE VOTERS UTILIZED 811 POLLING STATIONS. VOTING TOOK PLACE FROM 0700-1600. THE VOTES CAST IN THESE 811 POLLING STATIONS WERE COUNTED IN GROUPS CORRESPONDING TO THE 48 CONSTITUENCIES IN THE COUNTRY, AT 28 COUNTING CENTERS. THE RESULTS FROM THESE COUNTING CENTERS WERE TRANSMITTED TO 7 COLLATION CENTERS CORRESPONDING TO THE 7 ADMINISTRATIVE AREAS IN THE COUNTRY. EACH COLLATION CENTER REPORTED THEIR RESULTS TO IEC HEADQUARTERS IN BANJUL, WHERE THEY

WERE ANNOUNCED AS RECEIVED BY IEC DIRECTOR GABRIEL ROBERTS. PRESIDENT JAMMEH AND THE APRC RECEIVED 242,302 VOTES (52.96 PERCENT), OUSANINOU DARBOE AND THE UDP COALITION RECEIVED 149,448 VOTES (32.67 PERCENT), HAMAT BAH AND THE NRP RECEIVED 35,671 VOTES (7.8 PERCENT), SHERIFF DIBBA AND THE NCP RECEIVED 17,271 VOTES (3.78 PERCENT) AND SIDIA JATTA AND THE PDOIS RECEIVED 13,841 VOTES (3.03 PERCENT).

¶3. THE FOLLOWING PERSONS WERE AUTHORIZED TO BE PRESENT IN A POLLING STATION DURING THE POLL:  
POLLING STATION STAFF (CONSISTING OF A PRESIDING OFFICER (PO), AN ASSISTANT PRESIDING OFFICER (APO) AND TWO POLICE OFFICERS ASSIGNED AS SECURITY), POLLING AGENTS FROM ALL FIVE POLITICAL PARTIES, INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS AND CREDENTIALED PRESS.  
UPON ARRIVAL BEFORE THE 0700 STARTING TIME, ANY OF THE ABOVE-MENTIONED PRESENT WERE TO INSPECT THE VOTING DRUMS. EACH DRUM WAS TURNED UPSIDE DOWN TO SHOW THAT IT WAS EMPTY. THE ASSISTANT PRESIDING OFFICER THEN PLACED SAND IN THE VOTING DRUM, FOR STABILITY. WHILE OTHER POLLING STATION STAFF AND OTHER AUTHORIZED PERSONS WATCHED, THE PRESIDING OFFICER SEALED EACH VOTING CAN WITH NUMBERED RED PLASTIC SEALS AND LINKED ALL OF THE CANS TOGETHER WITH A METAL WIRE. THE CANS WERE LINKED TOGETHER IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER BY NAME OF THE CANDIDATE (BAH OF THE NRP, DARBOE OF THE UDP COALITION, DIBBA OF THE NCP, JAMMEH OF THE APRC AND JATTA OF THE PDOIS). VOTING OFFICIALS RECORDED THE NUMBERS ON THE SEALS BEFORE THE VOTING CANS WERE TAKEN INSIDE THE VOTING ROOM.

AS PER IEC REGULATIONS, THE VOTING CANS WERE COLOR-CODED ACCORDING TO POLITICAL PARTY (UDP YELLOW, APRC GREEN, NRP BLUE, PDOIS BROWN AND NCP WHITE). PICTURES OF THE POLITICAL CANDIDATES WERE AFFIXED TO THE VOTING CANS ALONG WITH THEIR NAMES AND CORRESPONDING POLITICAL PARTY SYMBOLS.

THE ACTUAL VOTING AREA WAS A ROOM OR AN ENCLOSED AREA OUTSIDE THAT HAD BEEN SET ASIDE FOR VOTING PURPOSES. THE VOTING CANS WERE PLACED ON A TABLE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROOM/ENCLOSED AREA. IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN PRIVACY DURING VOTING THERE WERE SHEETS PLACED ON THE WINDOWS AND THE ENTRANCE OF ROOMS, OR POLLING STATION STAFF GUARDED THE ENTRANCE TO THE ENCLOSED AREA.

ONCE A VOTER ARRIVED, S/HE PRESENTED HIS/HER VOTER REGISTRATION CARD TO THE APO. THE APO CALLED OUT THE VOTER'S NAME AND REGISTRATION NUMBER. THE POLLING AGENTS CONFIRMED THAT THE PERSON WAS ON THE POLLING STATION REGISTRATION LIST PROVIDED BY THE IEC. THE VOTER'S INDEX FINGER WAS DIPPED INTO PURPLE INK. THE APO GAVE THE PO THE VOTER'S VOTER REGISTRATION CARD. THE PO VERIFIED THAT THE PICTURE ON THE CARD CORRESPONDED TO THE PERSON PRESENT. AFTER RE-CONFIRMING THE VOTER'S IDENTITY, THE PO GAVE THE VOTER A YELLOW MARBLE AND ALLOWED HIM/HER TO ENTER THE VOTING ROOM/ENCLOSED AREA. THE APO, PO AND POLLING AGENTS WERE GENERALLY SEATED NEXT TO THE ENTRANCE OF THE VOTING ROOM/ENCLOSED AREA. VOTERS PLACED THEIR MARBLE IN A TUBE ON THE CAN CORRESPONDING TO THEIR CANDIDATE. AS THE MARBLE WENT DOWN THE TUBE INTO THE CAN, IT RANG A BELL, SIGNIFYING THAT A VOTE HAD BEEN SUCCESSFULLY CAST. THE PO LISTENED FOR THE BELL TO RING WHILE THE OTHER VOTING OFFICIALS CONTINUED TO PROCESS PEOPLE IN THE LINE. AFTER THE BELL RANG IN THE VOTING ROOM/ENCLOSED AREA, THE VOTER EXITED, AND THE PO RETURNED HIS/HER VOTER REGISTRATION CARD. THE PO THEN INSTRUCTED THE VOTER TO LEAVE THE ROOM/AREA.

¶4. IROG NOTED THAT IEC OFFICIALS AND PARTY AGENTS IN THE FONI REGION SEEMED TO BE DOING THEIR BEST TO KEEP VOTING ORDERLY DESPITE THEIR EGREGIOUS LACK OF

PREPARATION, ORGANIZATION, TRAINING, COMMUNICATION, AND MATERIALS. WIDESPREAD INCONSISTENCIES UNDERMINED THE SECURITY AND UNIFORMITY OF THE PROCESS. THE AREA RETURNING OFFICERS (ARO), WHO WERE SUPPOSED TO PROVIDE MATERIALS AND DEFINITIVE ANSWERS, SEEMED TO BE SPREAD TOO THIN OVER LARGE AREAS, AS THEY WERE NEVER AROUND WHEN THE POS NEEDED THEIR SERVICES.

AMONG 15 POLLING STATIONS, IROG NOTED AT LEAST THREE DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF THE CONTROVERSIAL RULE ON THE PROCEDURE FOR VOTERS WHO HAD CARDS BUT WERE NOT ON THE REGISTRATION LIST. AT LEAST 5 POLLING STATIONS WERE NOT ABLE COMPLETELY SEAL THE BALLOT DRUMS. AT THE SIBANOR COUNTING CENTER AT BWIAM, ONE CONSTITUENCY FOLLOWED IEC RULES TO THE LETTER, WHILE THE AROS FOR THE OTHER CONSTITUENCY DID NOT SEEM TO KNOW ANY OF THE RULES FOR COUNTING.

VOTERS WERE PATIENT AND CALM IN LINE AND IN POLLING STATIONS DESPITE EXTREME HEAT, WAITING PERIODS OF UP TO FOUR HOURS, AND CONFUSION ABOUT RULES AND PROCEDURES. DESPITE THE OBVIOUS HOLES IN THE VOTING PROCESS, IROG SAW NO EVIDENCE THAT THOSE HOLES WERE MALICIOUSLY EXPLOITED TO MANIPULATE THE RESULTS.

THE ATMOSPHERE IN FONI WAS SO STUBBORNLY PRO-JAMMEH THAT IT SEEMS DOUBTFUL THAT AN OPPOSITION SUPPORTER WOULD FEEL COMFORTABLE VOICING HIS OPINION. MOREOVER, KNOWING HOW MANY OF HIS FELLOW VILLAGERS WOULD VOTE FOR JAMMEH, ANYONE VOTING FOR ANOTHER CANDIDATE WOULD KNOW HIS SINGLE VOTE IN THE BALLOT DRUM WOULD STAND OUT.

15. CDA AND OUR POLITICAL ASSISTANT COVERED THE WEST COAST (THE NICKNAME FOR THE GAMBIA'S WESTERN DIVISION, AS WELL AS THE NAME OF THE GAMBIA'S MOST POPULAR RADIO STATION, BROADCAST ON 95.3 FM), WHICH INCLUDED POLLING STATIONS IN KANIFING, KOTU, KOLOLI, LAMIN, BAKAU, CAPE POINT, BRUFUT, FAJARA, GUNJUR AND KARTUNG ON OCTOBER 18. WE CHOSE THIS AREA BECAUSE THERE WERE FEARS THAT FOREIGNERS OF PRESIDENT JAMMEH'S DJOLA ETHNIC GROUP WOULD ATTEMPT TO USE FALSE VOTER REGISTRATION CARDS TO VOTE FOR HIM IN THESE POROUS BORDER AREAS.

GAMBIAN DEFENSE MINISTRY AND POLICE OFFICIALS HAD ANNOUNCED THAT SOLDIERS WOULD BE CONFINED TO THEIR BARRACKS ON OCTOBER 18 (SINCE SECURITY WOULD BE PROVIDED BY THE POLICE), SO WE WERE SURPRISED TO SEE UNIFORMED SOLDIERS AT THE FAJARA, BAKAU AND CAPE POINT POLLING STATIONS. INQUIRIES TO THE RESPECTIVE COMMANDERS ELICITED THE INFORMATION THAT ANY SOLDIER PRESENT AT A POLLING STATION WAS REGISTERED THERE AND SOLELY AT THAT STATIONS TO VOTE. WE VERIFIED THAT ALL THE SOLDIERS THAT WE SAW AT THE THREE POLLING STATIONS WERE ALL REGISTERED VOTERS THAT ALL VOTED AND LEFT PROMPTLY AFTER DOING SO.

THE IEC DID NOT REVERSE THEIR DECISION TO RESTRICT VOTING TO VOTERS LISTED AT THEIR RESPECTIVE POLLING STATION WHO HAD CORRESPONDING VOTER REGISTRATION CARDS, ALTHOUGH THEY DID ALLOW IEC WORKERS WITH VOTER REGISTRATION CARDS TO VOTE WHEREVER THEY WERE ASSIGNED. AS A RESULT, WE DID NOT SEE ANY EVIDENCE OR RECEIVE ANY REPORTS OF FOREIGNERS USING FALSE REGISTRATION CARDS TO VOTE. CDA NOTED SEVERAL WOMEN IN LINE NURSING THEIR CHILDREN WHILE WAITING, AS WELL AS SEVERAL VOTERS WHO STOOD ON LINE WITH THEIR LIVESTOCK...

16. AS THE GAMBIAN GOVERNMENT HAD ANNOUNCED THAT THEIR LAND BORDERS WOULD BE CLOSED FROM OCTOBER 17-19, WE ASKED OUR DATT TO COVER ILLIASA DIVISION. AN OPPOSITION STRONGHOLD AS WELL AS CONTAINING THE MAIN UPCOUNTRY ROAD/FERRY CROSSING AT FARAFENNI, ILLIASA ALSO HOSTS THE MAJOR UPCOUNTRY MILITARY BARRACKS AND CUSTOMS POST. IN LINE WITH OUR OTHER OBSERVERS, THE

DATT NOTED THAT THE VOTING PROCESS WENT MORE OR LESS SMOOTHLY, WITH HIGH VOTER TURNOUT AND VOTERS PATIENTLY WAITING IN LONG LINES WHICH WERE IN EVIDENCE BY 0615 IN THE MORNING. THE BORDER REMAINED HERMETICALLY SEALED THROUGHOUT THE ANNOUNCED PERIOD, FREEING THE NUMEROUS CUSTOMS OFFICIALS IN THE REGION TO PERFORM THEIR CIVIC DUTY WITHOUT FEAR OF BEING CALLED IN TO WORK. THE DATT DID NOT SEE ANY EVIDENCE OR RECEIVE ANY REPORTS OF FOREIGNERS USING FALSE REGISTRATION CARDS TO VOTE IN THIS HEAVILY-TRANSITED AREA.

17. WE SENT OUR GSO TO THE OTHER OPPOSITION STRONGHOLD OF KWINELLA, THE NEXUS OF KIANG CENTRAL DIVISION. THERE WERE VASTLY MORE WOMEN VOTING IN THIS DIVISION THAN MEN. THIS DISCREPANCY WAS EXPLAINED BY THE FACT THAT MOST MEN IN THE DIVISION WORKED IN THE GREATER BANJUL AREA, AND HAD CHANGED THEIR REGISTRATION ACCORDINGLY. IN ADDITION TO STRICTLY ADHERING TO VOTING PROCEDURES, OUR GSO NOTED THAT EACH POLLING STATION HAD DESIGNATED ONE OF THEIR POLICE OFFICERS TO ASSIST VOTERS WHO WERE ELDERLY/DISABLED OR OTHERWISE NEEDED ASSISTANCE TO/FROM (BUT NOT INTO) THE VOTING ROOM/AREA. HE SAW NO OTHER OBSERVERS OR MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES IN THE POLLING STATIONS HE VISITED. GSO ALSO NOTED THAT ALL VOTERS IN THIS AREA WERE DRESSED IN THEIR FINEST, COMMENSURATE WITH THE IMPORTANCE THEY ATTACHED TO THE OCCASION...

18. THE NUMBER OF REGISTERED VOTERS AT BIJILO EXCEEDED 1,000. TO ACCOMMODATE THIS LARGE NUMBER OF VOTERS, THE IEC DECIDED TO CREATE TWO POLLING STATIONS AT BIJILO PRIMARY SCHOOL. THE POLLING STATIONS WERE LOCATED IN THE SAME SCHOOL BLOCK BUT SEPARATED BY A FEW CLASSROOMS. OUR PROGRAM COORDINATOR (PC) OBSERVED THAT VOTERS APPEARED CONFUSED BY THIS ARRANGEMENT. THE FIRST VOTES AT EACH POLLING STATION WERE CAST AFTER 0700, BUT BEFORE 0800. SHE NOTED THAT VOTING WENT ON AT A BRISK PACE UNTIL SHE LEFT AT 1015 TO TRAVEL TO ALBREDA BY BOAT. SHE RETURNED TO BIJILO AT 1530 TO OBSERVE THAT BOTH POLLING STATIONS CLOSED ON TIME.

ARRIVING AT THE ALBREDA DOCK AT 1200, OUR PC WAS STRUCK BY THE SEA OF GREEN WHICH GREETED HER. THERE WERE LARGE GREEN FLAGS FLYING IN FRONT OF HOUSES AND SHOPS ALL THE WAY UP THE HILL TO THE POLLING STATION. THE PERSON WHO GUIDED HER FROM THE DOCK TO THE POLLING STATION VOLUNTEERED THAT ALBREDA AND JUFFUREH WERE APRC STRONGHOLDS.

THE POLLING STATION (NORMALLY USED AS A COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER) WAS CLEARLY IDENTIFIED AS A VOTING LOCATION. ONCE INSIDE THE COMPOUND, THE POLICE ASSIGNED TO THIS POLLING STATION DIRECTED OUR PC TO THE VOTING AREA. ALBREDA IS ONE OF THE FEW POLLING STATIONS WHERE A TEAM MEMBER MET REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL FIVE POLITICAL PARTIES. THE POLLING STAFF APPEARED WELL ORGANIZED AND CARRIED OUT THEIR DUTIES IN A PROFESSIONAL MANNER. IN RESPONSE TO HER INQUIRY, POLLING STAFF STATED THAT VOTING HAD TAKEN PLACE WITHOUT INCIDENT. VOTING BEGAN PROMPTLY AT 0700, AND ALTHOUGH THERE WERE LONG LINES, EVERYONE COOPERATED THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE PROCESS. STAFF HAD NOT COME ACROSS ANY VOTERS WHO WERE NOT PROPERLY REGISTERED TO VOTE. OUR PC WAS HEARTENED BY WHAT SHE SAW AT THIS POLLING STATION.

BEFORE DEPARTING FROM THE ALBREDA DOCK, OUR PC WALKED TO JUFFUREH (ABOUT 10 MINUTES AWAY) TO ELICIT BINTA KINTEH'S THOUGHTS ON THE POLL. MS. KINTEH CLAIMS TO BE THE OLDEST LIVING PERSON IN THE ALBREDA/JUFFUREH AREA, AS WELL AS A RELATIVE OF KUNTA KINTEH (OF 'ROOTS' FAME) AND FORMER U.S. AMBASSADOR TO THE GAMBIA GEORGE HALEY. MS. KINTEH STATED THAT SHE FELT IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR EVERYONE TO VOTE AND NOTED THAT SHE AND HER TWO DAUGHTERS HAD

VOTED EARLIER IN THE DAY (THEY DIDN'T SAY WHO THEY HAD VOTED FOR). THEY PROUDLY DISPLAYED THEIR PURPLE FINGERS TO OUR PC TO PROVE IT. MS. KINTEH ADDITIONALLY STATED THAT SHE FELT THAT VOTING IN HER AREA HAD TAKEN PLACE IN A FAIR AND PEACEFUL MANNER. OUR PC AND MS. KINTEH ENDED THEIR CONVERSATION BY WISHING EACH OTHER WELL.

19. THE SURPRISING EASE OF THE POLL DID NOT EXTEND TO THE COUNT. POLLING STATIONS OBSERVED STOPPED ACCEPTING NEW VOTERS MORE OR LESS AT OR AROUND 1600. HOWEVER, THEY THEN ALLOWED ANY VOTER PRESENT TO COMPLETE THE VOTING PROCESS, WHICH, IN SOME CASES, TOOK UP TO THREE MORE HOURS. THE PO, APO AND POLITICAL PARTY AGENTS THEN CARRIED THE VOTING CANS OUTSIDE THE VOTING ROOM/ENCLOSED AREA. IN THE PRESENCE OF THE POLICE, POLLING STAFF AND ANY OTHER AUTHORIZED PERSONS PRESENT, THE PO SEALED THE VOTING CANS WITH A WHITE CARD AND A NUMBERED RED PLASTIC SEALS (FOR A TOTAL OF FIVE ON EACH CAN). AT THIS POINT, THE PO BEGAN TO TALLY THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO HAD CAST BALLOTS. THE PO CHECKED THE NUMBER OF MARBLES REMAINING AGAINST THE TOTAL NUMBER OF MARBLES ISSUED FOR THE POLLING STATION BY THE IEC. THE PO ALSO CHECKED THE NUMBER OF MARBLES USED AGAINST THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE THE APO MARKED ON THE REGISTRATION LIST AS HAVING VOTED. THE POLITICAL PARTY AGENTS ALSO CHECKED THEIR LISTS TO CONFIRM THAT THE NUMBERS WERE THE SAME. THE TOTAL NUMBER OF REGISTERED VOTERS VERSUS THE NO-SHOW VOTERS WAS ALSO TALLIED. ONCE THIS PROCESS WAS CONCLUDED, POLLING STAFF RECORDED ALL RELEVANT INFORMATION ON IEC FORMS. THEN POLLING STAFF AND POLITICAL PARTY AGENTS WAITED FOR THE IEC-ASSIGNED ARO TO COME TO THE POLLING STATION WITH THE AUTHORIZED TRANSPORT TO THE COUNTING CENTER.

ONCE THE ARO ARRIVED WITH APPROVED TRANSPORT (THE EARLIEST THIS TOOK PLACE WAS AT 1745 AT CDA'S POLLING STATION, WHERE VOTING ENDED ON SCHEDULE AT 1600), THE VOTING CANS WERE PLACED IN IT. THE CANS WERE THEN TRANSPORTED TO THE RELEVANT COUNTING CENTER IN THE SAME VEHICLE ACCCOMPANIED BY ALL POLLING STAFF, POLITICAL PARTY AGENTS THAT WERE PRESENT (NORMALY JUST FROM THE UDP AND APRC) AND THE POLICE ASSIGNED TO THE POLLING STATION. THIS PROCESS WAS PATHOLOGICALLY DISORGANIZED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, AND WAS THE MAJOR BASIS FOR THE MORE THAN 24-HOUR DELAY IN ANNOUNCING THE FINAL ELECTION RESULTS.

CDA FOLLOWED THE VOTING CANS FROM HER CHOSEN POLLING STATION TO THEIR ASSIGNED COUNTING CENTER AT INDEPENDENCE STADIUM IN BAKAU (BANJUL). HER POLLING STATION WAS THE FIRST TO TURN OVER ITS CANS AT 1755. THE PO (IN THE PRESENCE OF THE OTHER POLLING STAFF AND ACCOMPANYING POLITICAL PARTY REPRESENTATIVES) HANDED OVER THE VOTING CANS TO THE CONSTITUENCY IEC RETURNING OFFICER.

ANOTHER MAJOR RESULTS-DELAYING FACTOR WAS THE FACT THAT THE RETURNING OFFICERS REFUSED TO COUNT THE RESULTS FROM POLLING STATIONS UNTIL ALL THE CANS FROM EACH CONSTITUENCY WERE PRESENT, RATHER THAN COUNT THEM AS THEY CAME IN. COUNTING FOR JESHWANG DID NOT BEGIN UNTIL 2130, AFTER THE CANS FROM ALL THE 24 POLLING STATIONS IN THE CONSTITUENCY ARRIVED. COUNTING STARTED WITH THE CANS FROM CDA'S CHOSEN POLLING STATION, SINCE THOSE CANS HAD BEEN TURNED OVER FIRST. THE COUNTING PROCESS WAS SYSTEMATIC, ORDERLY, TRANSPARENT AND ACCURATE, INCLUDED A CHALLENGE FROM THE APRC PARTY REPRESENTATIVE (LOOKING FOR 6 NON-EXISTENT ADDITIONAL VOTES) AND ENDED AT 2200.

ONCE ALL OF THE POLLING STATIONS HAD BEEN COUNTED (AT 1030 ON OCTOBER 19 FOR JESHWANG, SIMILARLY FOR THE OTHERS OBSERVED BY THE TEAM), THE RESULTS WERE

ENTERED ON AN IEC FORM AND THEN TAKEN TO THE COLLATION CENTER, WHICH WAS IN CDA'S CASE CONVENIENTLY LOCATED IN ANOTHER ROOM AT THE STADIUM. FROM THERE, THE RESULTS WERE FAXED TO IEC HEADQUARTERS AT 1100 ON OCTOBER 19. IEC DIRECTOR GABRIEL ROBERTS THEN OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED THE RESULTS AT 1400 ON OCTOBER 19.

¶10. INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVERS WERE UNIFORM IN EXPRESSING THEIR GENERAL SATISFACTION WITH THE CONDUCT OF VOTING ON OCTOBER 19. THERE WERE OVER 100 INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS PARTICIPATING IN THE POLL, INCLUDING OUR SIX. DR. JACKIE DUGARD OF THE COMMONWEALTH SECRETARIAT (WHO FIELDDED ABOUT 25 OBSERVERS) STATED THAT SHE WAS SURPRISED AAT HOW WELL EVERYTHING HAD GONE. SRSG JAMES GBEHO, CURRENTLY AN INDEPENDENT MP IN GHANA, CONGRATULATED THE GAMBIAN PEOPLE ON A JOB WELL DONE. EU RESREP GEORGE-MARC ANDRE STATED THAT HIS OVERALL IMPRESSION OF THE POLL WAS POSITIVE. UN RESREP JOHN KAKONGE STATED THAT THE FLAWS HE OBSERVED DID NOT PERTAIN TO THE ACTUAL POLLING OR COUNTING PROCESS. PURPORTED WORLD CONFERENCE OF MAYORS REPRESENTATIVE USC JOHNNY FORD AND HIS TEAM REPORTEDLY `HIGH-FIVED' ALL THE GAMBIAKS PRESENT IN THE BAR WHERE THEY HEARD THE OFFICIAL RESULTS ANNOUNCED, THEN STATED THAT THEY LOOKED FORWARD TO WORKING WITH A GAMBIA FREE OF OPPRESSIVE COLONIALST INFLUENCE...

¶11. IN A STUNNING SHOW OF ELECTORAL GRACE RARELY SEEN IN AFRICA OR ELSEWHERE, MAJOR CHALLENGER AND UDP OPPOSITION COALITION LEADER OUSAINOU DARBOE (WHO POLLED 32.67 PERCENT OF THE VOTE) CALLED PRESIDENT JAMMEH DURING THE AFTERNOON OF OCTOBER 19 TO CONCEDE DEFEAT. DARBOE THEN CONVENED A PRESS CONFERENCE AT HIS HOME TO ANNOUNCE HIS CONCESSION. HE STATED THAT HIS CONCESSION IN NO WAY SUGGESTED THAT THE ELECTION WAS FLAWLESS, RATHER IT SUGGESTED THAT AS A DEMOCRAT COMMITTED TO THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS, HE RECOGNIZED THAT HE HAD LOST THE ELECTION AND WAS READY TO FOCUS HIS EFFORTS ON THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS SCHEDULED FOR SPRING 2002, IN WHICH HE EXPECTS THAT THE COALITION WILL WIN A MAJORITY. THIS SENTIMENT WAS ECHOED TO CDA BY HIS CHIEF LIEUTENANT, M. DIALLO, AT A RECEPTION FOR INTERNATIONAL ELECTION OBSERVERS HOSTED BY THE UK HIGH COMMISSIONER THE EVENING OF OCTOBER 19.

¶12. WE SHALL PROVIDE OUR COMMENTS SEPTEL.

TITUS